

**THE COACH DEPOT, MORTON,  
NEAR GAINSBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

NGR:	SK 80681 91551
WLDC planning ref:	121428
PCAS job no.	954
Site code:	MCDM 12
Archive acc. no.:	LCNCC 2012.98

Prepared for  
Chestnut Homes Ltd.

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January 2013



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## Non-Technical Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording took place during development groundworks on a site at the former Coach Depot in Morton, near Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. Upper layers of brick rubble and made ground were encountered above a thick layer of alluvium. This alluvium was found to seal archaeological features of unknown date, most notably a large ditch, at a depth of 1.8m below the ground surface.

This document describes the archaeological methodology undertaken and outlines the results of the monitoring and recording.

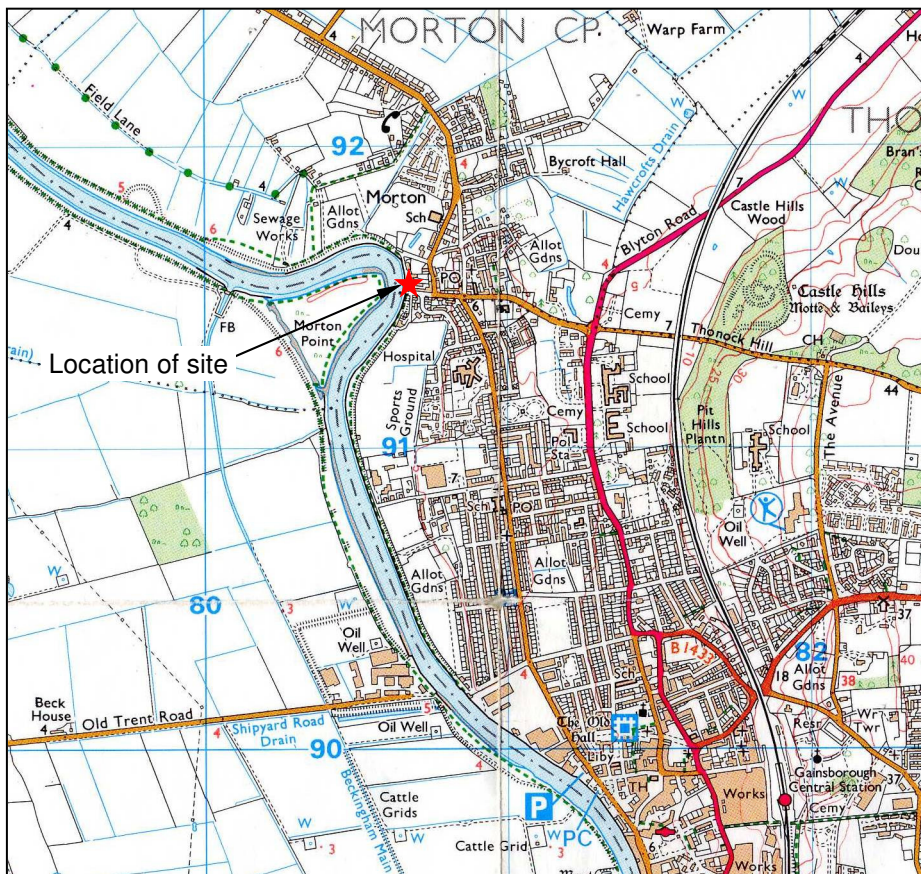


Figure 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000. The site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was requested by Chestnut Homes Ltd. to conduct a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on the site of the former coach depot in Morton, near Gainsborough, Lincolnshire in accordance with a specification approved by the monitoring authority. The work took place between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2012 and related to an essential drain diversion.

## **2.0 Site location and description (fig. 1)**

The village of Morton lies on the east bank of the River Trent, approximately 2km to the north of Gainsborough town centre, although the two settlements are now connected by later development. The development site is towards the north end of the village, and is situated on the apex of a sharp bend in the course of the river.

National Grid Reference: SK 80681 91551.

## **3.0 Geology and topography**

The drift geology in the immediate area of the site is alluvium deposited by the River Trent. The underlying solid geology is Keuper Marl/Mercia Mudstone (BGS, 1967).

The site lies within the Trent valley, on generally level ground below the 5m contour line.

## **4.0 Planning background**

Planning permission for development was granted in October 2009 (planning ref. 121428) and subsequently amended via a non-material amendment application (ref. 126542) in 2010. Whilst the works detailed within this report were not related to the aforementioned permissions, in the interest of good practice they were carried out in accordance with any relevant conditions. It stated:

No groundworks for the construction of a building or the installation of infrastructure should take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation has been approved by the District Planning Authority, in order to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for the investigation, retrieval and recording of any possible archaeological remains on the site and to comply with Policy STRAT1 of the West Lindsey Local Plan First Review 2006.

Chestnut Homes Limited have recently secured a new permission relating to the redevelopment of this site but are currently awaiting a satisfactory decision notice. It is understood that the condition referenced above will also apply to the new permission.

## 5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Due to extensive warping in the lower Trent Valley during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the accumulation of modern floodplain deposits of alluvium, there is little evidence of prehistoric activity from Morton. This is in sharp contrast to other areas of the Trent Valley where systematic fieldwalking, supported by the results of excavation and watching briefs conducted during the stripping of terrace and floodplain environments have identified extensive sub-alluvial spreads of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains (Knight, & Howard 2004).

The earliest mention of Morton comes from the 1086 Domesday survey where it is given as *Mortune*. The name is derived from the Old English *mor + tūn*, 'farmstead on the moor or marsh' (Mills, 1991). The medieval settlement of Morton was very small in 1086, but greatly expanded from the end of the Middle Ages onwards, latterly as a suburb of Gainsborough. Its layout is not that of the other small Trentside settlements north of Gainsborough, being constricted by limited river frontage and perhaps by an early east-west routeway. It appears to comprise a block of properties fronting the river, whose Back Lane has developed into a Main Street; a second core based on North Street and streets and lanes at right angles to the north side only of the east-west routeway. The settlement is sited below Thonock Castle on a great bend of the Trent where shipping first approaches the sold land of Lindsey, and at the end of what appears to be an early east-to-west routeway picked up by a series of parish boundaries. It was a strategic landing and perhaps crossing point (Lincolnshire HER ref. 51325).

Morton became a parish in 1846 when the church of St Paul was built by Thomas Johnson of Lichfield. The church, to the south-east of the development site, was re-built in the decorated style in 1891 (Hamilton, 2007).

An archaeological monitoring exercise was carried out during groundworks for a residential development on an adjoining site in 2007. No artefacts or features were revealed that pre-dated the modern structural remains of a warehouse on the site. Apart from some of the drainage trenches, which encountered alluvial deposits at a depth of 0.50m below the modern ground surface, the new development remained within made or disturbed ground. The report particularly noted that there was no evidence for a feature observed on aerial photographs and recorded in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record as a probable moated enclosure. Although the results of the exercise suggest that any trace of the enclosure (and any other archaeological activity) may have been destroyed by later structures, it is also possible that archaeological deposits may have survived undisturbed below construction depth, sealed by alluvial layers (*ibid.*).

## 6.0 Methodology

The groundworks comprised the excavation of three manhole reception pits to a depth of between 1.8m and 2.5m. Two pits were excavated along the footpath adjacent to the bank of the River Trent to the west of the development, linked by a short 2m drainage trench. A longer 14m run of drainage, 0.9m deep, connected these manholes to a third pit, excavated towards the north east corner of the site adjacent to Trentside Road. This was in turn linked to a redundant manhole that was subsequently removed to make way for an improved design to the south east and ultimately connected to an existing manhole located to the extreme east of the development in Trentside Road.

## 7.0 Results

**1:** After an initial visit on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, archaeological monitoring of the drainage works began the following day. This commenced with the digging a reception pit for a manhole. The pit was approximately 2m x 2m and 2.4m deep, later extended to c. 4m in length after the discovery of an obstructive brick culvert at the bottom (Masonry No. 104, see Figure 2). The excavation of the pit revealed a layer of made ground 0.64m thick, below which layers of alluvium were encountered but no archaeological features (Figure 3.1).

**2:** On the 17<sup>th</sup> the manhole pit was shored and excavation on the drainage run to the north begun. The excavation of a second manhole cut, linked by the drainage run to the first, was started on the following day. The same deposit sequence was observed and the remains of a possible post setting [105] observed in the east-facing section of the manhole pit (Figure 3.2), cut into the upper layer of alluvium. This is possibly evidence of an earlier, Victorian revetment of the river Trent.

**3:** On Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October work began on the drainage run from the second manhole position eastwards. This work continued on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> and culminated in the excavation of a third pit for a manhole to the east (Figure 2). The top of a ditch [115] was revealed in this eastern section, approximately 4m wide and with a distinct dark peaty fill, context no. (116), and oriented NE-SW. This may well be the moated enclosure referred to above in Section 5.0, and confirms the presence of archaeological features sealed by a thick layer of alluvium in this area (Figure 3.5). Unfortunately, however, no dating material was recovered from this upper ditch fill.

**4:** On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, the final day of work, manhole three was connected to an existing manhole to the south, which was then widened. The same deposit sequence was observed here as in other parts of the site, with no further archaeological features being recorded.

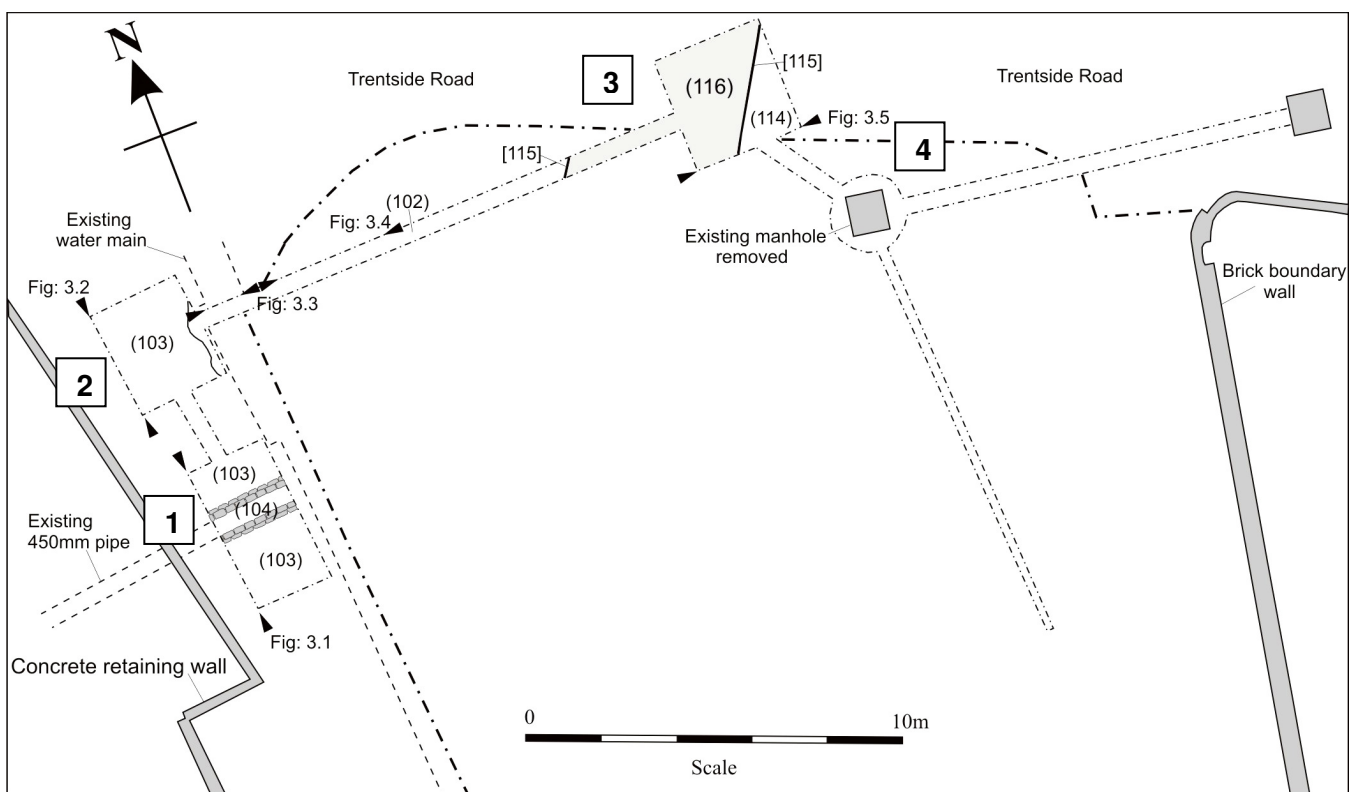


Figure: 2

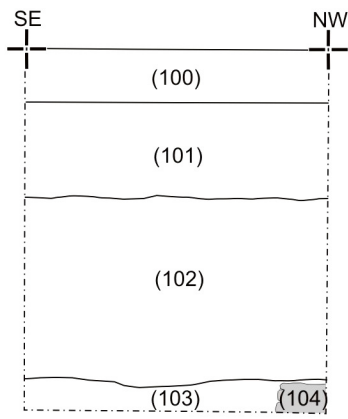


Figure: 3.1

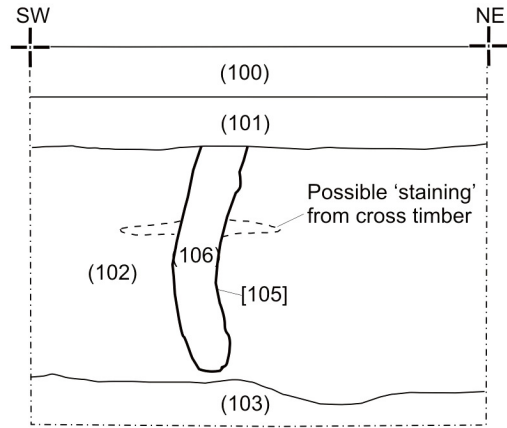


Figure: 3.2

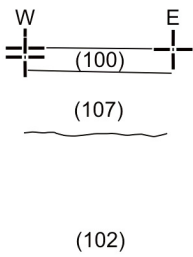


Figure: 3.3

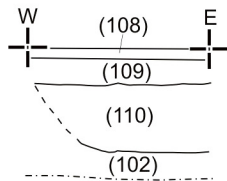


Figure: 3.4

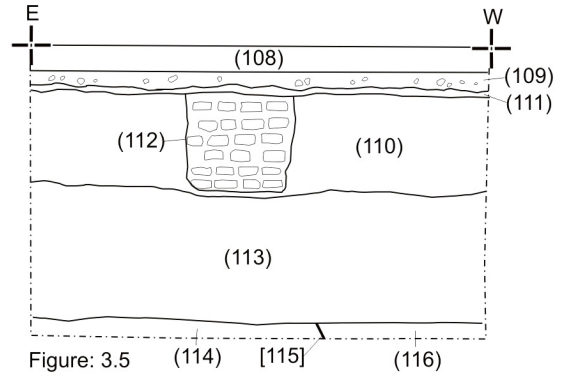


Figure: 3.5

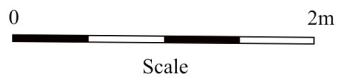


Figure: 3

## 8.0 Conclusion

The programme of observation and monitoring revealed that archaeological features (pertaining to ditch [115] Fig: 3.5) of an uncertain date remain preserved approximately 1.8m below the current ground level, sealed and presumably preserved below a thick layer of alluvium. In particular the excavation of the drainage trenches revealed the top of a large ditch, which may be part of a moated enclosure, at one time visible as a crop-mark feature.

The current groundworks did not impact or damage these archaeological horizons in any significant way.

## 9.0 References

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## Appendix 1

Context Number	Type	Description	Illustrations
100	Layer	Modern tarmac and hardcore bedding for road	Figures 3.1-3.3
101	Layer	Mid brown clayey silt. Made ground.	Figures 3.1-3.2
102	Layer	Mid brown clayey silt. Alluvium	Figure 2, Figures 3.1-3.4
103	Layer	Dark grey clayey silt. Alluvium	Figure 2, Figures 3.1-3.2
104	Masonry	Culvert made of bricks. Victorian?	Figure 2, Figure 3.1
105	Cut	Cut for possible post	Figure 3.2
106	Fill	Fill of post hole [105]	Figure 3.2
107	Layer	Made ground beneath footpath	Figure 3.3
108	Layer	Tarmac surface of old coach depot	Figures 3.4, 3.5
109	Layer	Hardcore and brick-rubble levelling	Figures 3.4, 3.5
110	Layer	Dark brown clayey silt. Made ground	Figures 3.4, 3.5
111	Layer	Thin deposit of mortar	Figure 3.5
112	Masonry	Brick wall. Part of former coach depot?	Figure 3.5
113	Layer	Pale grey silt. Alluvium	Figure 3.5
114	Layer	Pale brown silt. Alluvium	Figure 2, Figure 3.5
115	Cut	Cut of large ditch	Figure 2, Figure 3.5
116	Fill	Mid brown peaty silt. Upper fill of ditch [115]	Figure 2, Figure 3.5

## Appendix 2



**Plate 1:** General view of site, looking west.



**Plate 2:** Location of site along the bank of the River Trent, looking south.



**Plate 3:** Interface between made ground (110) and alluvium (102), looking north.



**Plate 4:** Manhole pit 3 showing ditch [115], (Fig: 3.5) looking north.

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